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H – 3430

International Court of Justice

H3430 – 0002

OFFICE OF CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

EVIDENCE DIVISION

Date : 13 July 1948

I certify that Document Number 3894-PS was introduced into evidence as Exhibit Number USA-843 in the Trial by the International Military Tribunal of Hermann GOERING, et al, which commenced on 20 November 1945, and that the attached photostat is a true and correct copy of the original.

Fred Niebergall

Fred NIEBERGALL
Chief, Document
Control Branch.

H3430 - 0003

C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the annexed document 3894-PS No. USA - 843 is a photostat of an original document submitted in evidence by the United States Prosecution under this number. The original document has been withdrawn in accordance with Rule 10 of the International Military Tribunal, and to the best of my knowledge and belief is to be held at the National Archives, Washington D.C. .

Paul Joosten

Nuremberg, 9 July 1948

PAUL A. JOOSTEN

General Secretary
International Military
Tribunal

3894-PS

169

No. I Civil Internment Camp
NEUMUNSTER, GERMANY
April 13, 1946

I, HANS POSSE, have read and understand the English record of my Interrogation at Neumunster on April 12, 1946. I hereby affirm that that record, consisting of eleven pages, represents my testimony which I have given voluntarily and under oath. I have signed each page of the Interrogation in question.

Hans Posse

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
NURNBERG, GERMANY
USA Exhibit 843
May 6 Filed 1946

SIGNED BEFORE ME THIS
THIRTEENTH DAY OF APRIL
NINETEEN FORTY SIX:

Bernard D. Meltzer

Bernard D. Meltzer
Lt. (jg) USNR

A 097269

H3430 - 0004

H3430 – 0005

Interrogation of Hans POSSE at NEUMUNSTER, Germany, April 12, 1946, 13,40 - 17,00 hrs; present Lt. Bernard MELTZER, interrogator : H. GANSCHOW, interpreter : Jean HOLT, Reporter.

LT. Meltzer to the interpreter :-

Q: What is your name and occupation ?

A; Hans Ganschow, Interpreter for No I Civilian Internment Camp.

Q: Do you swear to translate the questions faithfully and accurately from English into German and the answers from German into English ?

A: I do.

QUESTIONS BY LT. MELTZER TO THE WITNESS THROUGH THE INTERPRETER :-

Q: What is your name ?

A: Hans POSSE

Q: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God ?

A: I do.

Q: You were attached to the Office of Chief Plenipotentiary for the Economy in the German Government, were you not ?

A: I was Secretary of State in the Department of Economy.

Q: Did you also have the job of Deputy General for the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy ?

A: I was not actually Deputy of the Minister of Economics, I was Secretary of State in the Ministry of Economics, but when the Minister was either sick or away, I deputized for him, if he was not away too long.

Q: But there were two separate offices, the first the Ministry for Economics and the second a special Office known as the Plenipotentiary for the Economy ?

Hans Posse

A 097270

A: No they were not separate. The Ministry for Ecconomics was at the same time Plenipotentiary.

Q: But the organizations were separate.

A: The civil servants and employees employed by the Ministry of Ecconomics were also employed by the Chief Plenipotentiary for Ecconomics. The ~~same~~ staff of the Plenipotentiary was in general taken from the Ministry ~~existed for both.~~ BM

Q.: To refresh your recollection, I ask you to look at a photostatic copy of Document EC - 261 which refers to you as the Deputy General for the Plenipotentiary for Ecconomy.

A: I was the Deputy Chief Plenipotentiary for Ecconomy and I also deputized for the Minister when he was absent if he was not absent too long.

Q: When were you appointed Deputy General ?

A: As far as I can recollect, the Ministry of Ecconomics was transformed after Schacht had resigned and Goring took over the Ministry of Ecconomics for a short time. In this time, Goring had transformed the Ministry of Ecconomics and merged it with the Fours Year Plan. During this time, I was appointed Deputy Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy, but holding at the same time my position as Secretary of State in the Ministry of Economics.

Q: Who appointed you Deputy General for Economy ?

A: I think I was appointed either by Hitler or by Goring.

Q: Funk didn't appoint you ?

A: No.

Q: Did Funk confirm your position after he got into power ?

A: NO. Funk took over the Ministry for Economics from Goring and he was appointed as Chief Plenipotentiary for Economics.

Q: How often did you report to Funk in connection with you duties as Deputy General for the Plenipotentiary ?

A: The Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy never really went into action.

Q: That is not answering the question.

A: Yousee, there were several German Ministries that had to deal with economy and the plan was to merge the economic departments of the various ministries and to have them "under one roof ". At the same time when the Chief Plenipotentiary was appointed, a Chief Plenipotentiary.

Hans Fisse

H3430 - 0006

A 097271

H3430 - 0007

for the whole German administration was appointed.

Q: We are very familiar with all that.

A: I intended to give an explanation as to why the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy never functioned. When the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy was appointed, the intention was to merge all the economic departments of the German Ministries, such as Finance, Communications, Agriculture and Economy, under one roof. But the Ministers and the Secretaries of the various German Ministries disliked it and protested.

Q: But we have very clear-cut evidence that the Office of Plenipotentiary for Economy did function as an entity, separate from the Ministry of Economics.

A: Well, it did function, but it never achieved its purposes, because there was always discrepancy between ~~the Ministry of Economics and~~ the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economics' office and the other economic departments. They conflicted with each other.

Q: You mean the Plenipotentiary for the Economy and the Four Year Plan, don't you ?

A: All the Ministries. For instance, the Ministry for Communications, Finance, etc., - they all did not harmonize with the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy, and there was no harmony between the Four Year Plan.

Q: What was the nature of the conflict between the Plenipotentiary for Economy and the Four Year Plan ?

A: The struggle for power.

Q: The struggle for power between Funk and Goring ?

A: The struggle for power between Funk and Goring, between Funk and the Ministry for Agriculture and Ministry of Communications.

Q: How was the struggle finally resolved ?

A: Never. It was a struggle always continuing under the surface.

Q: Did Funk, who had very important powers as Minister of Economics and later as Reichsbank President and as Chief Plenipotentiary for the Economy, actually exercize these powers ?

Goering's Plan

A 097272

H3430 - 0008

A: Yes. But the powers of Goring were stronger.

Q: Nevertheless, Funk did exercize important powers ?

A: YES. As President of the Reichsbank, Minister of Economics and Plenipotentiary for Economy.

Q: I want to go back to the question of the separate function of Plenipotentiary's office. I want to ask you to look at and read over carefully this document which I ~~xxx~~ indentify as EC-488. This is a photostatic copy of the original German document, captured by the US forces and it deals with planning for the use of prisoners of war. (Witness read document.)

You have read that document ?

A: I have.

Q: Do you have any reason to doubt its authenticity ?

A: No.

Q: Did you participate in these dicussions about the planning of the use of prisoners of war ?

A: I cannot remember that I ever participated in any of the discussions concerning the document in question.

Q: That was very inportant and you were Deputy General, would not it have been likely that you did participate ?

A: I cannot remember to have participated. I have never seen the document. It was signed by Sarnow.

Q: You worked very closely with Sarnow ?

A: No, I did not. Sarnow is the man who expelled me from my position.

Q: When was that ?

A: I was expelled in 1939 - I cannot remember exactly when.

Q: Before you were expelled, what other problems were dealt with in the Office of Chief Plenipotentiary ?

A: The purpose was to merge conflicting economic interests.

Q: With what end in view. Dr. Posse, is it not true that the Office of Plenipotentiary for Economy was set up in order to coordinate all economic activities with a view to preparation for war ?

A097273

H3430 - 0009

A: The purpose was what I just said. To coordinate the conflicting economic interests with the view to one end, but there was no question of the view being to prepare for war.

Q: Are you familiar with Reich Defense Law of 1935 and the second one of 1938 which established the Office of Chief Plenepotentiary for the Economy ?

A: Yes, 1938, but not 1935. But in the Reich Defense Law of 1938 the Chief Plenipotentiary fo Economy is not mentioned.

Q: That is not true. It is mentioned. IN THE LAW of 1935.

A: I cannot remember.

Q: You can take it, it was so. But I want to go back to the Law of 1938, which you do remember. That law on its face made it clear that one of the purposes for setting up both the Plenipotentiary for Administration, who was Frick, and the Plenipotentiary for Economy, Funk, was to coordinate the German economy and German administration in order to prepare for War.

A: It is true that the purpose was to coordinate all economic questions, but not for the purpose of preparing war. But, of course, if war preparations would become necessary, it was also the task of the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy to deal with this question and to coordinate.

Q: And you, yourself, did deal specifically with the measures necessary for financing war, did you not ? I want to refresh your recollection again by showing you a photostatic copy of a German document captured by the U.S. forces and marked as 3562 - PS for purposes of identification. You will observe that that document is the Minutes of a Conference sent out over your signature and in the course of that meeting measures relating to the financing of the war were dealt with. (Witness read document.) You have read that document ? have you any reason to doubt its authenticity ?

A: No reason.

A087274

H3430 - 0010

Q: You recall the conference that this document records and summarizes ?

A: I cannot remember participating in any of the conferences mentioned in the document and there was another Chairman for the conference mentioned in the document.

Q: You sent the minutes out over your signature ?

A: The document you just gave me was ~~not~~ sent out under my signature.

~~Q: Just look at it again.~~

A: I was not there, because I was ill.

Q: But, had you not been ill, you would have been present and would have been Chairman ?

A: Yes.

Q: After you recovered from your illness, you studied these matters and took them up with Funk ?

A: Well, it may be that I did, because Funk was Chief Plenipotentiary.

Q: And this was very important matter. Didn't you usually discuss important matters in the Pleniportentiary's office with Funk, your Chief ?

A: Yes, I did. But much did not come out of it.

Q: But did you discuss them with Funk ?

A: Probably, but I cannot recollect details.

Q: In general, you reported fully and frequently to Funk, didn't you, about the activities of the Plenipotentiary's office ?

A: Yes, it was my job.

Q: What measures did you report to Funk about ?

A: I reported to Funk all matters of importance.

Q: What was the nature of these problems. What matters were you dealing with in 1939 ?

A: For instance, the question of which goods should get priority of transport by rail.

Q: And how did you decide this question ? What larger objective were you trying to achieve in your decisions on these questions ?

A: To give priority to these goods which were necessary for the economy.

Q: And how did you decide what goods were necessary for the economy ?

A097275

H3430 - 0011

A: That depended upon the seasons. Whether seed potatoes or any kind of vegetables or food, or coal was the most necessary.

Q: Is it not true that in deciding these questions, the most important factors were rearmament and preparation for war ?

A: There was always a conflict between the Ministry for Agriculture and the Ministry for Economics and the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy always tried to bridge these conflicts.

Q: Do you want the record to show that the Office of the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy, which under the law which set it up was directed to coordinate all of the economics forces in the interest of war, did not decide these questions with a view to achieving a strong economic basis for your armed forces ?

A: Apart from the war preparations, the daily requirements had to be dealt with.

Q: But Dr. Posse, many documents which we captured show that the attention of that offic was directed at the economic measures necessary for war. I have shown you two documents here.

A: But I think that you must also have hundreds of documents where other questions are dealt with.

Q: But the primary purpose of that office was economic preparation for war, was it not ?

A: Preparation for war was one of the main aims, but not the primary one. The essential aim was to reconcile conflicting interests. In trying to do this, the Chief Plenipotentiary failed.

Q: But you did not reconcile conflicting aims in a vacuum, you must have had a purpose to guide you in reconciling these aims ?

A: It is reason enough that the economic departments of the various ministries did not harmonize with each other.

Q: Was not a large part of your duties, the duties of the Plenipotentiary's office, taken up with the drafting of decrees ?

A: Yes, this was also part of our activities.

Q: What important decrees did you work on ? Think carefully now. You must remember the really important ones ?

A: I cannot recollect any details.

Q: Can you recollect in general ? We have the decrees, the details, but we want your view of it.

A097276

H3430 - 0012

A: As far as the food situation is concerned, the allocation of retions cards was prepared.

Q: In the course of your work, you discussed from time to time, the international situation, did you not ?

A: We never knew anything about the international situation and we did not learn or know anything about it, and when the international situation was mentioned in our discussions, we could only express our private opinions.

Q: But did not you and Funk discuss the international situation ?

A: No.

Q: One of the important purposes of your work was preparation for war, and yet you carried on that work without discussing the international situation and the possibility of war breaking out ?

A: Officially we had no news regarding the international situation. am J.

Q: What were your private views, in June of 1939, when you worked on measures for financing the war ?

A: We had always hoped that there would be no war.

Q: Did you ever discuss your private views with Funk ?

A: Yes.

Q: When did you discuss these matters, do you recall ? Spring, summer, 1939 ?

A: Spring and summer of 1939.

Q: And what views did Funk express ?

A: Funk was as anxious as I was and as much scared as I was concerning the outbreak of a war. I wrote a memorandum against the war and handed it to Funk, suggesting that he pass it on to Hitler, but Funk did not hand it on to Hitler, because he thought that it would not impress Hitler.

Q: What did you put in your memorandum ?

A: That we cannot wage a war against the whole world.

Q: Did you expect at that time to wage a war against the whole world, or against Poland ?

A: I believed that if there had been a war between Germany and Poland, a world war would have become inevitable. I knew England - I had to deal with a lot of English Government officials. am J.

Q: Did Funk agree with you ?

A: I don't know.

Funk Rose

A 097277

H3430 - 0013

Q: Did you discuss these matters ? What was his reaction ?

A: Funk said to me, even if the statements in your memorandum are correct, I won't pass them on to Hitler, because Hitler won't take any notice of them.

Q: But did Funk indicate whether he thought these views were correct ?

A: I think he agreed with me, because we never disagreed as far as economic matters were concerned.

Q: Did he say that he agreed with you in so many words ?

A: I cannot remember. Funk may have hinted he agreed with me.

Q: When did you write this memorandum ?

A: In 1939.

Q: What part of the year ?

A: Early summer, perhaps.

Q: You told us earlier that you knew nothing about the international situation, why did you write this memorandum ?

A: I was afraid of the devolpment of things.

Q: How did you know about the development of things ?

A: I learned about the development from the newspapers.

Q: And from your newspapers you thought that a war against Poland would break out, which would become a World War ?

A: Of course, the German newspapers did not indicate that a war against Poland had become inevitable, but I could read it between the lines.

Q: Did you keep a copy of your memorandum which you sent to Funk ?

A: The copy was destroyed - burnt - in an air-raid.

Q: Did you collaborate with Funk in the measures he took to safeguard German gold and foreign exchange abroad in preparation for war ?

A: I never was an expert regarding financial matters.

Q: But did you collaborate in these matters ?

A: No, it was not my duty, but came under the jurisdiction of the Reichsbank.

Q: Did Funk either before or after that memorandum ever talk to you or his staff about his general view of the international situation ?

A: No.

Q: Not privately ?

A: No, he never did and they, in their capacity as civil servants, never learned anything regarding the international situation.

Funk Rose

A09727

H3430 – 0014

Q: Except from the newspapers ?

A: Yes.

Q: And you as a subordinate of Funk's were willing on the basis of the newspapers and no other information to address a memorandum to the Führer, which, in effect, said that the course the Führer was taking was wrong?

A: We discussed the international situation very often when we, in our capacities as civil servants, were by ourselves, and we considered it necessary to warn the Führer.

Q: What people did you mean when you said "we" ? What were their names ?

A: With my colleagues and the members of my staff.

Q: How big staff did you have ?

A: Twenty or thirty members - all professional people.

Q: You were still in the Plenipotentiary's office after the war broke out, were you not ?

A: I was removed immediately after the war broke out - August or September.

Q: And who was resonsible for your removal ?

A: It was Göring who disbanded the institution of the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy.

Q: You mean that the functions of the Plenipotentiary were transferred to Göring ?

A: They were transferred partly to Göring and partly to the Minister of Economics.

Q: Were you asked to leave the German Government, or did you do so voluntarily ?

A: Göring declared to me that there were no more functions for me as Deputy General for the Chief Plenipotentiary for Economy.

Q: Why were you not transferred to the Ministry of Economics, as a State Secretary ?

A: I maintained my position as Secretary of State in the Ministry of Economics and held that position until the capitulation. But before the war, I was only Secretary of State in the Ministry of Economics, and after the war broke out I was only the second secretary of state, without functions, and a first secretary was appointed.

Q: Who ?

A: First Brinkmann and then Landfried.

Q: You say that you had no functions whatsoever ?

A 097279

H3430 - 0015

A: No - only in the year 1941 when I was appointed Reichskommissar of the Unilever Company.

Q: Where were your offices then ?

A: In Unilever House, Berlin.

Q: Unilever was an English/Dutch company ?

A: Yes.

Q: Are you familiar with the economic policies which were laid down for the occupied territories ?

A: No.

Q: So until 1941 you were in the Ministry of Economics and, in time of war, you had no function whatsoever ?

A: Yes; I was Chairman of the board of directors in some jointstock companies in which the shares were owned by the Reich.

Q: But you had no Ministerial functions yourself ?

A: No.

Q: Are you familiar with what persons in the Ministry of Economics were responsible for determining the economic policies for occupied territories ?

A: I knew the Secretary of State, my colleague Landfried.

Q: He was, was he not, involved in the setting of policy for the occupied territory ?

A: No, it was not Landfried, but the Minister, Funk.

Q: You know that Funk did lay down these policies ?

A: Funk could not do it on his own - the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture, etc. were also involved.

Q: How did Funk run his Ministry, did he have a tight hold on it, or did he delegate the work to his State Secretaries and chief assistants and allow them to carry it on ?

A: I only give my private views, because at that time I was not enough concerned with the business in the Ministry of Economics.

Q: Surely you were in the Ministry and you talked to your colleagues-you must know how the Ministry was run ? We are interested in your views, whether private or otherwise, so long as they are the truth.

A: Funk only dealt with important matters because there was too much work for him apart from his position as Minister of Economics, he was also President of the Reichsbank.

Q: That will be all.

Yours Poor

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USA 843 (3894-PS)

Filed May 6 1946
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EXHIBIT-USA

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12 Pages